

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.'s
MEDIA INTERVIEW**

Villamor Air Base, Pasay City
February 28, 2024

[00:00:00]

PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.: Oo, pinagaaralan talaga namin iyon dahil kung paghihiwalayin natin iyong --- kung paghihiwalayin natin iyang election at saka iyong plebiscite, parang dalawang eleksyon iyon eh, napakamahal.

So, baka maari kung isama natin iyong plebisito sa local elections na gagawin sa Mayo next year. Malaking bagay iyon, malaking savings para sa atin iyon kaya't iyon, kaya iyon pinag-aaralan naming mabuti.

There's some legal consequences because a plebiscite is slightly different, not so --- plebiscite is different from an election. So, if we are able to incorporate the two exercises together, as a practical matter palagay ko makakatulong iyan.

REPORTER: iyong timetable po ng House gusto nila July po eh, paano po kaya iyon?

PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.: Well, iyan kausapin natin si Speaker. Sasabihin --- well hindi ibig sabihin na pagka natapos ang House or ang Senado, kailangan nang magplebisito kailangan na --- maaari naman tayong maghintay para magplebisito, sabay na nga nung local elections.

So, titignan natin, ngayon pa lang namin ito --- we just came to that idea when we --- kasi nagpo-progress na iyong mga resolutions sa Cha-cha sa Senado, nagpo-progress na rin sa House kaya't ngayon pinag-iisipan natin, paano natin gagawin, ano ang mekanismo para sa plebisito.

So, we're studying it and I think there's a potential there that we can possibly exploit. So, we'll see.

It really comes down to a practical thing. Mag-o-organize tayo --- kasi ang plebisito parang eleksyon din iyan eh. So, mag-e-eleksyon ka tapos magpe-plebisito ka, it's very hard also to have a plebiscite before the election kasi mabubulilyaso iyong preparation para sa halalan. So, iyon na nga. We have to take all of these things into account and I think we'll come to a good solution, I think.

[00:02:15]

REPORTER: Salamat po.

REPORTER: Sir, wala raw po kayong objection sa PhilHealth premium rate hike? Is it still under review, sir?

PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.: It's under review. What we are trying to determine is that if we are going to increase the contribution from four percent to five percent, anong bawi? It's really a cost-benefit analysis. And PhilHealth has been expanding its services and trying to reach more people, and trying to engage more people.

And like for example iyong mga pinagbabayad sa mga nagda-dialysis, has increased almost three times; the payment out for even catastrophic, like cancer, has increased by tenfold.

So, kung may benepisyo naman, if we can justify the increase then we'll do it but if not, we won't. Ganoon lang kasimple iyon. It's just a very straightforward cost-benefit analysis.

We're still under study but we'll come to a conclusion very, very soon.

Yeah. Hello.

REPORTER: Your thoughts, sir, on the development of the West Philippine Sea. There's been electronic interference, there's been sighting of a warship, how are we going to respond?

[00:03:40]

PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.: It's worrisome because there are two elements to that: one is that the --- dati Coast Guard lang ng China ang gumagalaw doon sa area natin. Ngayon, may Navy na, sumama pa ang mga fishing boat. So, nagbabago ang sitwasyon but --- well, maliwanag naman para sa atin, we don't really --- we just watch, of course, what everybody is doing, but really for us, patuloy pa rin natin, we just defend our maritime territory. We continue to support all of our fishermen, our fisherfolks who make their living from these fishing grounds at patuloy naman nating tutulungan sila.

At despite whatever else happens, bi-na-block tayo, kung ano, may shadow, eh patuloy pa rin ang ating gagawin dahil iyan naman ang trabaho natin; trabaho natin tulungan natin iyong mga fishers na matagal na, ilang henerasyon na doon nangingisda. So, that's essentially the issue there.

So, that's the basic principle there, is that the fishers must be allowed to fish in their traditional fishing grounds, which belong in the maritime territory of the Philippines.

REPORTER: Good morning, sir.

Sir, hingin lang naming iyong statement ninyo sa naging statement ni Pastor Quiboloy.

PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.: Kay? Pastor?

REPORTER: Quiboloy sir, he's claiming that you and the First Lady are conniving with the US to assassinate?

PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.: [laughter] The U.S. --- the cases against him in the US were filed before I became President. So, I guess he's very worried doon sa ano.

Well, I would just advise him that just kung mayroon naman siyang sasabihin, if --- he has an opportunity in the hearings both in the House and in the Senate to say his side of the story. Ngayon, kung sinasabi niya hindi totoo lahat iyan, hindi totoo, walang nangyaring ganiyan, 'di sabihin niya.

At pagka ganito, anong nangyayari diyan, hindi siya sisipot. Pag hindi siya sumipot baka ma contempt siya, oh tapos, tuloy-tuloy. Ay naku. Eh mas malaking gulo.

Kung makapunta siya, sagutin niya lahat ng tanong, 'di tapos na.

That's why my advice for him is to just face the questioning in the House and in the Senate. Marinig natin ang kanyang side para malaman natin kung ano ba talaga ang nangyayari dito.

We're trying to be fair here and allowing him an opportunity and fora to make his case. So, I think he should take advantage of that.

REPORTER: Pero sir, iyong claim niya po na assassination that you've... What's your take on this, sir? [laughter]

PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.: Walang may gustong mag-assassinate sa kanya. Bakit siya i-assassinate, wala namang — I mean, why would anyone want to do that? I, maybe, he's just very, very --- wala na, I just... hindi ko naiintindihan iyong sinasabi niya. Bakit siya i-assassinate.

REPORTER: Baka naka-fentanyl po, Mr. President [laughter]

PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.: Hindi naman siguro. Pero hindi ko alam, siguro natatakot siya dahil sa mga pangyayari. But again, the best way to defuse that situation for him is to testify before the committees in the House and in the Senate.

REPORTER: Thank you po, sir.

PRESIDENT MARCOS JR.: All right.
[00:07:56]
